

SUCCESS

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Newsletter for Lake County Workforce Development

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Lake County Workforce Development funds qualified job seekers for short-term training in high demand occupations. Recently, the program added a 'work experience' component. Trainees may be matched with a three-month paid internship that allows them to add practical knowledge to their portfolio. Workforce Development is a partner within the **Job Center of Lake County**.

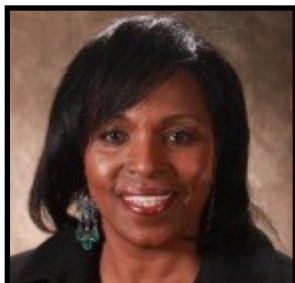
CDL Truck Driving

Frank lost his job as an Automotive Mechanic in 2014. He looked for work on his own for almost a year without success. When he first visited the Job Center, he was struggling financially and stressed about his future. He says one of his biggest challenges was keeping a positive attitude after a negative experience at his previous job. It was important to him to get back on a career track soon.

Frank told his Workforce Development Career Specialist that he had always wanted to drive a truck. He qualified for CDL training and attended classes at **Eagle Training Services** from October to November 2015. He found a job listing with Paschall Truck Lines on Indeed.com. He applied and was hired as a Truck Driver in January 2016. Driving nationwide, he enjoys the variety and freedom of his new job. He will earn approximately \$55,000 this year. Frank tells other job seekers to persist even when employers don't respond.



Project Management



When **Venice** was laid off from a job in July 2015, she found that she was overlooked for several positions because she lacked Project Management (PMP) certification. When she learned she qualified for grant funding for training, she jumped at the chance. She started coursework at **Microtrain** in October 2015. She completed training in both Lean Six Sigma and Project Management and passed the PMP certification test on the first try in December 2015. Venice almost immediately found herself reviewing several job offers. She selected a position as **Director of IT Governance and Business Operations** for the corporate headquarters of a retail cooperative. She now earns \$190K annually. She says that the position leverages her training, certifications and previous work history.

Information Technology (IT)



Tim was hired as a full-time **IT Service Technician** for the County of Lake in January 2016 at a wage that is 60% higher than his salary at his last job. His career transition took almost 2 years, but Lake County Workforce Development was with him throughout this time.

Tim was laid off from a recruiting job at a market research firm in 2014. He looked for work for almost 8 months. Fortunately, right around the time that Tim's unemployment was running out, Workforce Development was seeking individuals who were long-term unemployed for retraining. He received a letter inviting him to stop in the Job Center to learn more about training in the IT industry. Tim qualified for training at **Microtrain** where he completed courses in CompTia A+, Net+ and Microsoft MCSA.

After Tim completed training, he spent several months looking for work but found it was difficult to secure work when he had little formal experience in the field. Workforce Development qualified him for a 3 month paid internship. He interviewed and was accepted as an intern with the Lake County IT department. During his first 2 weeks on the job, Tim erased and reformatted 480 old lap top computers. Many might call that task boring, but Tim was sure it was the start of something new. He shadowed another employee in the department on assignments throughout county departments. Eventually, Tim applied and was hired for an open position at the department where he interned. He says he is thrilled with the variety and challenge that his new job offers. "In the IT field, you never stop learning. I'm constantly developing my skills."

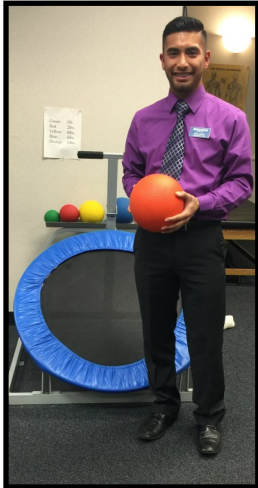
Medical Assisting

Victoria was a Jewelry Service Associate in 2014 but worked less than 20 hours per week due to decreased business. Victoria connected with the Lake County Job Center and qualified for funding to obtain training. She chose to study **Medical Assisting** at **State Career College**. The school sent her to a one month externship at the Lake County Health Department where she was able to put classroom training to practice. Workforce Development then placed her in a three month internship at the Veteran's Assistance Commission. She gained additional office experience entering confidential client information and answering phones. Working with a Workforce Development Employment Specialist, Victoria continued to apply for jobs and practice interviewing skills. Victoria applied for a job at the Health Department and was contacted for an interview. The initial interview proceeded well, and she was invited for a second interview. Victoria was hired permanently by the Health Department in February 2016 as a **Medical Assistant**.



Youth

Lake County Workforce Development funds a number of programs in local high schools to help young people complete and continue their education. The examples below are graduates of the **Jobs for Bees program** at Zion-Benton Township High School and the **Shine** program at Waukegan High School. These programs typically include tutoring, college visits and work experience or internships.



Giner Brian graduated from Waukegan High School in 2015. While in school, he participated in the Shine program where he learned 'acceptable work related behavior' and prepared for his college education.

He participated in an internship at Athletico Physical Therapy where he first observed therapists working with patients and completed office tasks. They gradually gave him greater responsibility as they saw his work ethic; after graduation, Giner was offered a job as a **Rehabilitation Aide**. Giner also volunteers at the Waukegan High School as a tutor, helping other students prepare for college, as he himself attends classes at the College of Lake County.

Jocy participated in a 132 hour internship at Walgreens through the Shine program. She was mentored by a Shine graduate who worked at the company. She says the position was very challenging as she needed to learn the classification and usage guidelines for all medications. After graduation, she was offered a full time position as a **Pharmacy Technician**. "Working in a pharmacy allows me to . . . serve patients. I want people to be interested in the type of work that I do and the impact I have on people."



Mark was in an accident the summer before his sophomore year and lost all his eye sight in one eye and half in the other. The Jobs for Bees program helped him to overcome that challenge. He was placed in an internship at an automotive shop near his home. After graduation, he was accepted to Wyotech where is pursuing certification in Diesel Mechanics.

Ask the WIB: Advancing Your Career

All Lake County Workforce Development programs operate under the oversight and strategic guidance of the Lake County Workforce Development Board. Recently, we asked Board member Carlotta Roman about how to get from where you are in your career to where you want to be. She laid out a four-step plan for moving up the ladder. Here is Carlotta's advice for advancing your career . . .



The first step is really the foundation of your career progression. In order to be successful in your career or in life, **self-awareness is critical.** Take some time to learn your strengths and weaknesses, and understand how you work in a team setting. If you're not sure where to start, online assessment tools like those on www.illinoisworknet.com are a great place to start. Also, think about what you bring to the table in terms of diversity. This goes well beyond race, ethnicity or gender. Generational diversity, diversity of communication style or personality type all play a role in today's work places. How can you identify and maximize the characteristics that make you unique and then capitalize on them in your current role? What do these characteristics say about how you should plan your career path?

Now you need to focus on your professional brand. Whether you know it or not, people around you have a perception of you. Are you known as "the person that always comes in late" or "the person that always gets things done"? Everything you do (or don't do) contributes to your brand. Spend some time examining your brand and develop a strategy to build on it or rehabilitate it so that you're in a position to leverage your brand to move up.

The next step in the process is networking. The old adage that it's not what you know, but who you know that matters, is true when it comes to career advancement. Unfortunately, most people find the process of networking daunting, but instead think of it as building a support system. Everyone needs a support system that includes: juniors (people that you can mentor), peers (people you work side-by-side with), seniors (people working at higher levels than you), and sponsors (people that have high level decision making power). Make sure your support system includes people within your company, people within your field, and people outside your field. Try unconventional ways to build relationships: volunteer, participate in activities, and participate in professional organizations.

In addition to working these steps, you also need to make the most of where you are now. No one will promote you unless you are doing great work in your current role, so make sure you're taking care of your "day job". Be sure to set goals. Be sure to be realistic, but hold yourself accountable by mapping out what you need to accomplish your goal, how you're going to get there, who can help you, and when you plan to reach your goal. Then, jump in feet first and make things happen. Lastly, be sure to celebrate your successes along the way!

Carlotta Roman currently works for VW Credit, Inc. and has been involved in corporate training and development for the past eight years focused in the areas of organizational development, change management, coaching, leadership and management assessments. She challenges leaders to go beyond their positional authority and power, but rather to lead through value-driven leadership, positive influence and employee empowerment.

Ms. Roman holds a Master in Public Services Management and a Master in Human Resources. She will begin her doctoral studies in Business Psychology at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

5 Steps to Your Next Job

Lake County Workforce Development offers a five-day workshop series called '**5 Steps to Your Next Job**' once a month at various locations in Lake County. Participants receive 10 hours of training in the latest job search techniques and network with other job seekers and workforce professionals.

The individuals below participated in '5 Steps' in 2016. See what they're doing now!



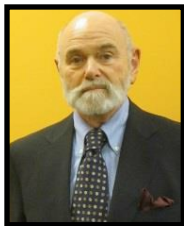
Gonlee

Sales Representative



Tina

High School
Special Education
Teaching Assistant



Lynne

Outside Sales,
Business to Business
Energy Broker



Selina

Global Document
Specialist in
pharmaceuticals



Antoinette started a new job as a **Flex Nurse** at a long-term care facility in April 2016. The job marked the beginning of her new life in Lake County. She grew up in Chicago and completed training as an LPN (licensed practical nurse). She worked for 4 years at a VA Hospital, but then married and became a housewife. When her husband died in 2013, her whole life changed. She couldn't find work and eventually lost her apartment.

A friend let Antoinette move into her basement temporarily; then, she spent a week in a hotel room, frantically making phone calls as she tried to arrange housing. She finally connected with a family friend who told her about a residential home for women in Lake County. She had never visited Lake County and had no idea what to expect.

Antoinette arrived in Lake County in February 2016. As soon as she was settled, she started visiting the Job Center daily to find work. She used the computers for job search and completed the '5 Steps to Your Next Job' workshop series. She applied to many jobs online. When a staff member told her that Terrace Nursing Home might be hiring, she looked the company up online. Although the website didn't list any job opportunities, she decided to visit the facility. She walked in and spoke with a supervisor who let her fill out a paper application. A week later, she was hired.

LAKE COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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Job Center of Lake County

An Illinois **workNet**® Center

TRAINING • CONNECTING • DEVELOPING ILLINOIS' WORKFORCE

An equal opportunity program/ employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to persons with disabilities.

Partnering for People with Disabilities

Goodwill Great Lakes and Lake County Workforce Development started a unique partnership in 2016. Goodwill runs an AbilityOne Program that provides employment opportunities to qualified individuals with disabilities. However, meeting with applicants at their work site at Naval Station Great Lakes is challenging due to base access restrictions.

Workforce Development offered Goodwill a space to recruit and process candidates at the Job Center in Waukegan. Initially, Goodwill staff meets with the public and discuss eligibility requirements and the application process. Applicants are then invited back to the Job Center for a day of interviews, drug screening and job offers. "The most challenging part of the process for the applicant is obtaining the documentation to determine eligibility for the program," explains Ericka Monson, Goodwill Intake Specialist. "We help them get all their paperwork done." Applicants may also be referred directly by a **Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) staff member at the Job Center.

Within the first 3 months of this partnership, Goodwill staff saw 80 applicants; 11 of those are currently hired and in training. "It's important that we have these public sessions," explained Ericka. "The Job Center has given us the opportunity to reach out to more people."

*** DEI is the Disability Employment Initiative. Two Workforce Development staff members are employed at the Job Center through this grant that aims to improve training and employment opportunities to people with disabilities.*



Ericka and Amy from Goodwill Great Lakes have been visiting the Job Center regularly to help individuals with disabilities to complete the application process